United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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Letter of transmittal

6 October 2004

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 58/18 of 3 December 2003.

The report covers the period from 10 October 2003 to 6 October 2004.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I
Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly[1] were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,[2] the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State. The Committee also continued to mobilize international assistance for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

4. In the past few years, the Al-Aqsa intifada against the Israeli occupation continued in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Government of Israel intensified its military raids, particularly in the Gaza Strip, resulting in an unprecedented destruction of homes and infrastructure and a rapidly rising number of civilian deaths and injuries. The momentum achieved in 2003 has been lost owing to Israeli actions on the ground, the continuing Israeli army operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the expansion of settlements and the construction of a wall on Palestinian land. On the other hand, suicide bombings and Qassam rocket attacks by Palestinian groups against civilians in Israel also contributed to the cycle of violence and exacerbated tensions. There was particularly strong criticism among members of the international community of the continued construction of the wall, which has asphyxiated and divided Palestinian communities and where residents have lost homes, farmland and access to jobs, schools and medical care. The horrific effects of constant military incursions and the hindrance of free movement has had a devastating effect on the humanitarian situation. The hope for a political settlement between the parties generated by the road map has dimmed, with deeper mistrust and despair taking its place.

5. The Committee welcomed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which found that the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the

occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, were contrary to international law[3] and that the construction of the wall severely impeded the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination.[4] The Committee emphasized adherence to the rules and principles of international law as the sine qua non for a negotiated solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

6. The Committee expressed grave concern at the lack of implementation of the road map, despite the efforts of the Quartet and the international community to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. In the period under review, the Government of Israel has not begun meeting its road map obligations. Since the start of the intifada, the Palestinian Authority has faced the destruction by the occupying Power of its institutions and infrastructure, severe fiscal crisis and continued confinement of its President. These challenges notwithstanding, the Palestinian Authority has clearly stated its commitment to reform.

7. The Committee also expressed concern over Israel's announcement of a so-called unilateral disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip, and parts of the West Bank. Its position is that any withdrawal from the Gaza Strip must be full, done in coordination with the Palestinian Authority and must be accompanied by similar steps in the West Bank.

8. The Committee urged the Quartet and the international community to intensify their engagement as a matter of great urgency to help the parties to commence implementing their obligations under the road map, which provides for the way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and the principle of a permanent two-State solution to the conflict, based on 1967 borders, the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the right of all States to live in peace and security.

Chapter II
Mandate of the Committee

9. On 3 December 2003, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (resolution 58/18), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its work (resolution 58/19) and requested the continuance of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat (resolution 58/20). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 58/21, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III
Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

11. In a letter dated 28 April 2004, the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations had informed the Chairman of the Committee of the decision of his Government to resign its membership of the Committee as at 1 May 2004 and the Committee took note of the decision. The General Assembly, at its 91st plenary meeting on 18 June 2004, had before it a letter dated 10 June 2004 from the Chairman of the Committee addressed to the President of the Assembly (A/58/841) and took note of the decision of the Government of Hungary, as relayed therein (see A/58/PV.91).

12. At its 277th meeting, on 12 March 2004, the Committee elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman and Orlando Requeijo Gual (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman. It re-elected Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur.

13. At its 277th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2004.[5]

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of and permanent observers to the United Nations wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

15. In 2004, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.[6]

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

16. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments. The unremitting Israeli military incursions in areas under Palestinian control continued during the year, dramatically increasing the numbers of those killed and wounded, and resulting in the devastation of Palestinian cities and communities. The Committee was deeply troubled by the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli army and the practice of collective punishment, in grave breach of international humanitarian law. The expansion of settlements and outposts and the construction of the wall in the West Bank continued at a brisk pace, along with the demolition of houses, confiscation of Palestinian property and unprecedented restrictions of movement. The number of Palestinians killed, in the four years of the intifada, has reached a total of over 3,700, with some 35,700 injured. The growing number of children directly harmed by the ongoing violence has been especially worrying. The number of deaths of children under 18 years of age has exceeded 690.

17. The Committee remained concerned over Israeli military operations in densely populated residential areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the Gaza Strip. Army operations were routinely backed up by armoured vehicles and the air force. In December 2003, the Israeli Defense Forces carried out almost daily incursions into Nablus, resulting in deaths and injury to Palestinian civilians and the destruction of historic buildings and homes in the Old City. In May 2004, the Rafah area in the Gaza Strip was subjected to a major military operation, "Operation Rainbow", aimed at preventing weapon-smuggling operations between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. On 13 May, Israeli officials announced a plan to demolish hundreds of houses in order to widen the border area (the "Philadelphi corridor") between Rafah and Egypt. Military bulldozers flattened huge swathes of the city, resulting in a humanitarian crisis in Rafah. In response to the deterioration of the situation on the ground, the Security Council adopted resolution 1544 (2004), calling on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and not to undertake demolition of homes contrary to that law. A month-long siege in Beit Hanoun in July 2004, known as operation "Forward Shield", left behind broken buildings and flattened citrus orchards. On 28 September 2004, a massive military operation code-named "Days of Penitence" was launched in the northern Gaza Strip, particularly in the densely populated towns of Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun and the Jabaliya refugee camp, home to over 100,000 refugees. Over 80 Palestinians were killed and more than 300 were injured within a week. Other Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps (Bethlehem, Jenin, Khan Yunis, Zeitoun, Balata refugee camp) were not spared the deadly incursions and blockades, intensifying the crisis. The raids seriously hindered the work of humanitarian aid workers. Ambulances were shot at by Israeli snipers and delayed or blocked by Israeli authorities. Since the start of the intifada, more than 65,998 Palestinian buildings, including homes, were fully destroyed or partially damaged. In Rafah alone, some 2,500 buildings were completely destroyed. Since January 2000, 184 dwellings have been demolished in East Jerusalem, 149 belonging to Palestinians.

18. The Israeli army intensified extrajudicial killings, including the assassination of the leader of Hamas in March 2004, followed by the killing of his successor in

April 2004. The international community voiced its strong indignation at the killings, leading to the Security Council holding public debates in the aftermath of both executions (see S/PV.4929, S/PV.4934 and S/PV.4945). The Committee has repeatedly condemned the policy and practice of targeted assassinations as it is inadmissible under international humanitarian law. At the same time, it strongly condemned all terrorist attacks against civilians in Israel, which cannot be justified and destroyed prospects of reconciliation between the two parties.

19. The Committee has strongly condemned Israel's continued siege on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat at the muqataa in Ramallah for almost three years, seriously preventing him from properly carrying out his duties as elected leader of his people. A worsening fiscal crisis has likewise affected the Authority's effectiveness in delivering core services to the population. Four years into the crisis, the Palestinian Authority was facing acute economic and fiscal challenges, with a financing gap estimated at US$ 890 million for 2004. However, it managed to continue providing for basic needs, including education, health, water, electricity and sewerage, although the standards of such services have declined. Efforts by the Palestinian Authority at introducing reforms continued in the finance and public administration areas. Since March 2004, members of the security services have received their salaries through bank accounts, replacing payment in person. Progress has been made in areas of local government reform and restructuring of the Ministry of National Economy. In August 2004, the Palestinian Authority announced the holding of simultaneous presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections by spring 2005. The Palestinian Central Elections Committee expressed concern about the registration of voters, given the curfews and Israeli military incursions.

20. In February 2004, the Government of Israel announced that it would withdraw military installations and all settlements from the Gaza Strip, as well as certain military installations and four settlements from the West Bank. The plan, which was approved by the Cabinet on 6 June 2004, stipulated that the Government would convene periodically to approve each step of the evacuation, with the process to be completed by the end of 2005. In its statement of 22 September 2004, the Quartet reiterated its view that no party should undertake unilateral actions which could prejudge issues that could only be resolved through negotiation and agreement between the parties. It also emphasized that an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip should be full and complete and be undertaken in a manner consistent with the road map, as a step towards ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967. It urged both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to coordinate closely in the preparation and implementation of the Israeli withdrawal initiative.

21. The Committee noted with growing concern that, during the period under review, the Israeli Government continued the expansion of settlements and the establishment and consolidation of so-called outposts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in violation of its obligation under the road map. Based on a survey carried out in June 2004, settlement expansion activity was under way at 73 of 211 settlement locations, including 12 of the 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip. The total area of expansion was close to 500,000 square metres and included new and continuing land development for settlement, new infrastructure, new and continuing construction within the settlements, internal road works and the placement of new caravans. In and around East Jerusalem, settlement activity proceeded at a rate unmatched since 1992. Settlement activity connecting East Jerusalem and "Ma'ale Adumim" could result in splitting the West Bank into two

separate Palestinian cantons, having serious implications for the territorial contiguity of the West Bank. In December 2003, Israel began constructing a new settlement, "Nof Zahav", in East Jerusalem. It would comprise 550 housing units, hotel and schools, and would divide the village of Jabal Mukabbar, home to 10,000 Palestinians. During the same month, the Ministry of Housing and Construction published tenders for 64 housing units in "Pisgat Ze'ev", 180 housing units in "Givat Ze'ev" and 153 units in "Karnei Shomron". On 16 February 2004, the Knesset Finance Committee voted to allocate NIS 96 million (US$ 22 million) for housing projects, almost entirely in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. On 17 August 2004, the Housing and Construction Ministry issued tenders for the construction of some 1,000 new housing units in the settlements of "Betar Ilit", "Ariel", "Ma'ale Adumim", and "Karnei Shomron". The Defence Ministry confirmed that it was part of the policy to increase the size of the large settlements which Israel planned to keep after the unilateral disengagement. An additional 301 new settler homes were to be built beyond the municipal line of the "Har Gilo" and "Har Adar" settlements. In September 2004, 100 outposts were identified in the West Bank, 51 of them established since March 2001. Existing outposts were reinforced with new infrastructure, such as paved roads, running water and electricity in the first four months of 2004. Since October 2003, there has been no serious effort made by the Government of Israel to remove the outposts, as required by the road map.

22. The construction by Israel of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, continues to cause great hardship to the Palestinians. Some 875,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, 38 per cent of the population, have been affected by the wall. Some 263,200 living in 81 localities have become isolated. The wall creates a fait accompli on the ground that could well become permanent and lead to the de facto annexation of Palestinian land. In June 2004, construction began east of the settlement of "Ariel", linking it to "Kedumim" and "Karnei Shomron". This will result in the seizure of land from one dozen villages, driving a wedge deep into the West Bank and rendering the establishment of a contiguous Palestinian State very difficult. In October 2003, the General Assembly had demanded that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the wall and had requested the Secretary-General to report periodically on its compliance (resolution ES-10/13). In a report dated 24 November 2003, the Secretary-General stated that Israel was not in compliance with the Assembly's demand (A/ES-10/248, para. 3). The Assembly subsequently requested the International Court of Justice to render urgently an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall (resolution ES-10/14).

23. The Committee welcomed the advisory opinion of the Court, issued on 9 July 2004, in which the Court determined that the wall and its associated regime were contrary to international law, that Israel was under an obligation to cease the construction and to dismantle portions built on Palestinian land, and to provide reparations to Palestinians whose lives had been harmed by the wall. On 20 July 2004, the Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, adopted resolution ES-10/15 demanding that Israel heed the Court's opinion. Israel vowed to continue building the wall despite the Assembly vote. On 30 June 2004, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered changes in the trajectory of the wall along a 30-kilometre segment north of Jerusalem, stating that the separation from their agricultural land injured local inhabitants in a severe and acute way. In response to the ruling of the Israeli High Court of 30 June, the Defence Ministry presented changes in the route of the

wall south of Hebron, which would be closer to the Armistice Line of 1949 (more commonly known as the Green Line). Settlements such as "Karmel", "Maon", and "Susia" would remain on Palestinian land, with fortifications to be built around them. However, 15 square kilometres of Palestinian land remained on the Israeli side of the wall.

24. According to the Israeli Interior Ministry, from June 2003 to June 2004, the settler population grew by 12,306, an increase of 5.32 per cent, with a total of 243,749 living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The fastest growth in Gaza was seen in the settlements slated for evacuation under the disengagement plan: "Kfar Darom" (21.5 per cent), "Netzarim" (13 per cent) and "Morag" (12.3 per cent). Two thirds of the overall growth (some 8,100) was attributed to the high 3.5 per cent fertility rate among settlers. Official Israeli population in the Gaza Strip now stands at 8,158. Assaults by settlers on Palestinians, including murder, the destruction of vehicles and crops, physical and verbal assaults, and other actions have continued and have become more vicious.

25. The harsh system of curfews and closures imposed by Israel, which severely restricts the movement of Palestinian people, goods and services, remained the central impediment to economic stabilization and recovery. The border between Gaza and Egypt was closed for three weeks in July 2004, stranding some 3,400 Palestinians on the Egyptian side, where a number of pregnant women suffered miscarriages. Refugees, women and children bore the brunt of Israeli measures and malnutrition was on the rise. Unemployment stood at 26 per cent by the end of 2003 but was as high as 70 per cent in some areas. Over 60 per cent of Palestinians currently live below the poverty line, with two million living on less than US$ 2.1 a day. Damage to public structures and properties has reached an estimated US$ 1.2 billion. The current Palestinian recession is among the worst in modern history, according to a World Bank study. Israel's disengagement plan would have little impact since it proposed a limited easing of closure.

26. The Committee expressed grave concern over the devastating effects of the Israeli occupation on the lives of the most vulnerable members of Palestinian society, women and children. The hardship of daily life was felt most acutely by Palestinian women, who carried the burden of responsibility within the household owing to the death, imprisonment or unemployment of its male members. At least 38 per cent reported increased difficulties in gaining access to health services. Delays at checkpoints have resulted in 46 women delivering their babies while waiting for permission to pass. As a result, 24 women and 27 newborn babies have died since June 2003. The violence that children witness has a severe impact on their general behaviour and on their ability to concentrate in school. At least 69 per cent have received psychological counselling to help to alleviate symptoms caused by constant exposure to traumatic incidents, including the harassment and humiliation endured by their parents. Schoolchildren have been subjected to hours of waiting at checkpoints to get to their schools, particularly since the construction of the wall. During the past year, around 1,500 school days have been lost and pass rates in schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East have sharply declined. More than 25 per cent of children suffer from chronic malnutrition.

27. In August 2004, about 4,000 Palestinian prisoners participated in an 18-day hunger strike protesting the systematic violation of their rights, including torture or

other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, harsh solitary confinement, neglect of prisoners' medical needs and denial of family visitation rights. Over 7,000 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prisons, detention and interrogation centres. This figure included more than 200 children who turned 18 while in prison and were then classified as adults. Some 370 children (under 18 years) remained incarcerated. Over 100 women, including girls, were also in Israeli prisons. Approximately 700 prisoners were being held in administrative detention, not charged with any offence and yet to face trial. The Committee has repeatedly called on Israel to abide by its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention)[7] and find a solution to the issue of Palestinian prisoners. In a statement issued on 24 August 2004 (see para. 45 below), the Bureau of the Committee urged Israel to heed the strikers' demands, to ensure that the detainees were treated in a humane manner and that proper detention conditions were immediately established and basic human rights restored.

28. Many Palestinian towns and villages continue to suffer from severe water shortage. In the Gaza Strip, the problem is compounded by the poor quality of the water, exposing residents to severe health risks. On average, a Palestinian is allowed 83 cubic metres of water per year, whereas each Israeli uses 333 cubic metres per year. Many villages are suffering from a serious water shortage owing to the Israeli siege which prevents water tanks from reaching villages. The construction of the barrier in some of the most fertile areas of the West Bank has affected local access to water and has serious implications for longer-term water use. Without urgent modification of its route, the wall will dramatically increase Palestinian impoverishment by reducing access to irrigation water. Any disengagement process in which electricity or water supplies are terminated will further exacerbate the living conditions of the Palestinians.

29. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remained the main provider of education, health care, social services, and emergency aid to over 4 million Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank and Gaza. The deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where UNRWA served a population of approximately 1.6 million refugees, further stretched the dwindling emergency funds of the Agency as assistance to the refugees had to be stepped up. Furthermore, operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip continued to suffer from restrictions on humanitarian access and other disruptive measures. For example, troops from the Israeli Defense Forces broke into the UNRWA office in Jenin on one occasion, handcuffing and blindfolding the Jenin Reconstruction Project Manager. In June 2004, gunfire from Israeli positions hit an UNRWA office in the Tel es-Sultan area near the Rafah camp and damaged the water tanks of its office near the Khan Yunis refugee camp. On separate occasions, three children were hit by Israeli gunfire as they sat in UNRWA classrooms. At times, staff found themselves caught in the crossfire between the Israeli Defense Forces and the Palestinians. On 14 July 2004, an UNRWA convoy, which included the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, was fired at during a delivery of food to some 20,000 residents of Beit Hanoun. The Agency appealed to all parties to respect the integrity of its facilities and the neutrality of its staff. Its field operations in Gaza continued to provide all services despite the relocation of some staff owing to safety concerns. The Committee continued to express its gratitude to the UNRWA staff for their dedication to their

work and repeatedly appealed to the international donor community to give generously to all international aid agencies that pursue their work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under increasingly perilous conditions.

30. The Committee also continued to express its gratitude to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The new UNDP office, inaugurated in the Gaza Strip in November 2003, continued to provide technical and development assistance to the Palestinian people as it has done for over 25 years. Its work did not only focus on the restoration of damaged infrastructure, but on institution-building and the strengthening of a partnership for years to come. The Committee expressed its appreciation to all other entities of the United Nations system for their continued assistance to the Palestinian people.

Chapter V
Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/18

31. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

(a) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

32. On 14 October 2003, a draft resolution on the construction of a wall by Israel was not adopted by the Security Council in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member. At the request of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October 2003 (see A/ES-10/242), the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly was resumed to discuss the situation on the ground, under the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Permanent Representative of Malaysia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, conveyed the support of the Movement for the resumption of the session (see A/ES-10/243). The session was resumed on 20 October, when the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.21). On the following day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/13.

33. The tenth emergency special session of the Assembly was resumed on 8 December 2003 (eleventh resumption) to consider the report of the Secretary-General on compliance with Assembly resolution ES-10/13, at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Kuwait in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of December (see A/ES-10/249). The Permanent Representative of Malaysia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, conveyed the support of the Movement for the resumption of the session (see A/ES-10/251). The Chairman of the Committee, Papa Louis Fall, took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.23 and Corr.1). At the end of the debate on the same day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/14 and a draft decision.[8]

34. On 16 July 2004, the tenth emergency special session was again resumed (twelfth resumption) to consider the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Jordan in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of July (see A/ES-10/274). The Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Malaysia, on behalf of the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, conveyed the support of the Movement for the resumption of the session (see A/ES-10/275). The Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.24). On 20 July 2004, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/15.

(b) General Assembly meeting on agenda item "Question of Palestine"

35. On 6 May 2004, the Assembly met to consider a draft resolution on the status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (A/58/L.61/Rev.1). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (A/58/PV.86). At the end of the debate, the Assembly adopted resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004.

(c) Security Council meetings

36. During the year, against the backdrop of the highly dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Security Council has monitored the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. Throughout the year, the Council heard monthly briefings under agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

37. The Security Council met on 14 October 2003, at the request of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October (see S/2003/973). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Fall, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4841). At its 4842nd meeting, on the same day, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Guinea, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2003/980). The result of the vote was 10 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.4842).

38. At its 4862nd meeting, on 19 November 2003, the Council considered the agenda item and voted on a draft resolution submitted by Bulgaria, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (S/2003/1100), which was adopted unanimously (resolution 1515 (2003)).

39. The Security Council met on 23 and 25 March 2004, at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March (see S/2004/233). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4929). At its 4934th meeting, on 25 March 2004, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (S/2004/240). The result of the vote was 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.4934).

40. The Security Council met on 19 April 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Egypt in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of April (see S/2004/303). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4945).

41. The Security Council met on 19 May 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of May (see S/2004/393). At its 4972nd meeting, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria and Yemen (S/2004/400), which was adopted by 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention (resolution 1544 (2004)). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, made a statement (see S/PV.4972).

42. The Security Council met on 4 October 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October (S/2004/779). At its 5051st meeting, on 5 October 2004, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Pakistan and Tunisia (S/2004/783). The result of the vote was 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.5051).

2. Statements by the Committee

43. On 20 November 2003, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement (see GA/PAL/934) welcoming the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1515 (2003), in which the Council endorsed the Quartet's performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (S/2003/529).

44. On 13 July 2004, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement (see GA/PAL/962) welcoming the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, in which the Court stated that the construction of the wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and its associated regime are contrary to international law.

45. On 24 August 2004, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement (see GA/PAL/964) expressing grave concern at the systemic violation of the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons and was alarmed at the growing number of prisoners who were on a hunger strike.

3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings

46. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental bodies and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) Tenth session of the Islamic Summit Conference, Putrajaya, Malaysia, 16 to 18 October 2003;

(b) Thirty-first session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Istanbul, 14 to 16 June 2004;

(c) Fifth ordinary session of the Executive Council and third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 30 June to 3 July and 6 to 8 July 2004, respectively;

(d) Fourteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (Mid-term Review), Durban, South Africa, 19 August 2004.

47. As in previous years, the Committee continued to follow the activities of other intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine, as well as the decisions and resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies and agencies.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 58/18 and 58/19

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

48. In its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The meetings addressed such issues as the situation on the ground and the importance of protecting the Palestinian population; the construction of the wall and its implications; the need to resume the political process and to implement the road map; and the further involvement of civil society.

49. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Meeting for Asia and the Pacific on the Question of Palestine, Beijing, 16 and 17 December 2003;

(b) Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, Beijing, 18 December 2003;

(c) United Nations International Meeting on the Impact of the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, United Nations Office at Geneva, 15 and 16 April 2004;

(d) United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cape Town, South Africa, 29 and 30 June 2004;

(e) United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of Middle East Peace, Cape Town, South Africa, 1 July 2004;

(f) United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, United Nations Headquarters, 13 and 14 September 2004.

50. All of the above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as experts, representatives of the media, academics and students. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's web site.

51. In the course of the meetings held in Beijing and Cape Town, the delegation of the Committee held discussions with high-ranking host Government officials who welcomed the efforts of the Committee geared towards mobilizing support for the resumption of the political dialogue between the parties and the implementation of the road map. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of China and South Africa for having provided the venues and facilities for the events sponsored by the Committee. It expressed particular gratitude to the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, for his personal support of the African meeting.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental and other organizations

52. During the year, the Committee continued its close cooperation with the African Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, through the participation of the Chairman in their meetings and through periodic consultations held at United Nations Headquarters.

53. The Committee continued to maintain its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. The Bureau held consultations with representatives of the European Union in June 2004 (under the Presidency of Ireland) as part of the continued effort to build a constructive relationship with European Union members on issues of common concern.

54. On 14 April 2004, the Bureau of the Committee met with staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross in charge of operations in the Near East. The Chairman expressed the Committee's appreciation for the work done on the ground by the International Committee. It was agreed to continue consultations on issues of mutual interest.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

55. The Committee continued to develop its cooperation with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and media representatives. It followed attentively the manifold activities of civil society organizations in various parts of the world, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel, and expressed its appreciation for their useful and committed work. The Committee welcomed the Peoples' Voice and Geneva initiatives, which had generated genuine interest in their visionary approach to the core issues of the conflict. It also noted with interest the numerous initiatives taken on the ground, and internationally, against the construction of the wall. The Committee was deeply appreciative of the work of many civil society organizations which were providing emergency relief under the most difficult circumstances. It encouraged all of the organizations to continue their activities and to engage vigorously in order to ensure that Israel, the occupying power, and all Governments and intergovernmental organizations live up to their legal obligations as spelled out in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Committee stressed that there was greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion of the applicable rules and regulations of international law and the legitimate rights of the parties, which should lead to national and international action in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

56. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with the national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual non-governmental organizations. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity on 29 November 2003. In the period under review, the Committee also accredited 16 additional non-governmental organizations. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of civil society organizations accredited to the Committee were held at United Nations

Headquarters on 15 September, following the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People. Participating representatives of non-governmental organizations provided information about their initiatives, campaigns and projects, described the obstacles that they are facing on the ground in implementing the projects and asked the Committee to support concerted international action in support of the Palestinian people. The delegation of the Committee recommended to the representatives that their initiatives be based on international law as laid out in the advisory opinion, the Fourth Geneva Convention, in particular, and on resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. The Chairman of the Committee met throughout the year with representatives of civil society organizations either in New York or at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters.

57. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet web site "NGO Network on the Question of Palestine" as a permanent tool of mutual information and cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The web site can be found at http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo. The Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter, *NGO Action News*, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

58. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. On 14 April 2004, the delegation of the Committee met at the United Nations Office at Geneva with members of the Committee on Middle East Questions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the IPU secretariat. The Chairman of the Committee commended the IPU efforts in support of the Palestinian people, in particular in promoting a dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

59. The Division continued to carry out research and monitoring activities, respond to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine, and prepare for dissemination, including through UNISPAL, the following publications, the continued relevance of which was reiterated by the Committee:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations and intergovernmental organizations in relation to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of developments relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletin and note on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments relating to Middle East peace efforts;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

60. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to maintain, expand and develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly since 1991. This included the ongoing upgrading of the system's technical components to ensure its uninterrupted presence on the Internet, notably via the UNISPAL "Question of Palestine" interface on the United Nations home page, under "Peace and Security", and involved the expansion of the documents collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness of accessing and navigating the system (http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf) as preparations for the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" site progressed.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

61. One staff member from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from October to December 2003, in conjunction with the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The trainee familiarized himself with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs, and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

62. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna on 1 December 2003. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "Palestine: Reflections of Resilience and Hope" was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

63. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2004.

ChapterVI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/20

64. The Department of Public Information, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 58/20 of 3 December 2003, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. It carried out this work in close cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political Affairs and, through the Division, with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

65. The United Nations web site maintained the web page on the question of Palestine under the "Global Issues" site. The page features events, documents and learning materials, as well as statements on the subject made by the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. The question of Palestine is also featured under the "Peace and Security" and "Refugees" pages of the United Nations web site. Links are available to UNISPAL and other web pages created by the Division for Palestinian Rights. In addition, the United Nations Web Site Section webcast all meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly and most press conferences on the question of Palestine held at United Nations Headquarters.

66. Also on the United Nations web site, the United Nations News Centre continued to feature extensive coverage of the question of Palestine and a broad range of developments related to the situation in the Middle East in all official languages. During the reporting period, the Arabic web site was visited approximately 112,000 times, registering 2.12 million hits on various pages and files within the site. The news stories on these issues were also distributed throughout the world to over 27,000 subscribers to the e-mail service of the United Nations News Service in English and French. To facilitate user access to United Nations resources on the question of Palestine, a special "Focus" page on the news portal provided links to key reports, statements, resolutions and other related material.

67. The Department issued 49 press releases in English and 48 in French on the question of Palestine. In addition, the completely updated edition of the popular and best-selling *Basic Facts about the United Nations*, expected to be issued in September 2004, will include an extensive section on the Middle East, in which all aspects of the Palestinian question are addressed.

68. United Nations Radio continued to cover various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in its news bulletins and current affairs magazines in the six official languages, as well as in a number of non-official languages. The Department facilitated the dissemination of UNWRA footage of the destruction of Palestinian housing to international broadcasters.

69. The Department organized a training programme for five young Palestinian television and radio broadcasters at United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Information Centre in Washington, D.C., and the United Nations Office at Geneva, from 10 November to 19 December 2003, with a view to strengthening their capacity as media professionals.

70. The Department organized an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East in Seville, Spain, on 21 and 22 October 2003, in cooperation with the Foundation of the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean. A similar seminar was organized in Beijing, from 16 to 17 June 2004, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China. The proceedings of the Seville seminar were published in New York early in June 2004.

71. The Department arranged three briefings on the question of Palestine for visiting students in March and April 2004. One of the briefings was on the United States national model United Nations, which was attended by 2,000 students. During the reporting period, the Department responded to approximately 2,000 public inquiries relating to the Middle East.

72. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued its cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights on the digitization of documentation for UNISPAL.

73. The *UN Chronicle and UN Chronicle Online* reported on a regular basis on relevant events and issues and action taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Press releases, Op-Ed pieces, statements, documents, audio-visual material, reports and studies were brought to the attention of target audiences, posted on web sites and made available to visitors to the reference libraries maintained by their offices.

74. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities.

75. A major focus of their work was the promotion of the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Department organized the installation of the annual exhibit on Palestine at United Nations Headquarters during the observance of the Day. Special events and activities to observe the event were organized, and the Secretary-General's message for the Day was widely disseminated by the centres, services and offices, in particular those in Accra, Geneva, Lisbon, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Pretoria, Rabat, Sana'a, Tehran, Tunis, Vienna and Warsaw.

76. A representative of the United Nations Information Centres in Cairo participated in a seminar on the issue of the barrier, organized by the Afro-Asian Lawyers Federation in February 2004, and its Director gave a number of television interviews on issues relating to Palestine. The Centre in Beirut provided information support to a newspaper columnist regarding the passage of United Nations humanitarian supplies to the poverty-stricken Palestinian areas. The Centre in Ouagadougou organized a briefing session for students on Palestinian rights. The Centre in Rio de Janeiro published a main feature story on the United Nations and the question of Palestine in the July/August 2003 edition of its bi-monthly magazine, "UNews-Brazil". The Centre in Tokyo organized a press conference for the visiting Commissioner-General of UNRWA and issued a press release on the conference in January 2004. It also organized a two-month long exhibition on UNRWA in the public lobby of the United Nations University in Tokyo from mid-January to mid-March 2004. The Centre in Washington, D.C., arranged the Washington segment of the Department's training programme for Palestinian media practitioners and accompanied them on their briefing visits. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva organized the Geneva segment of the training

programme, which included interaction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other United Nations agencies and the European Broadcasting Union, and prepared a press kit in English and Arabic. In her twice-weekly press briefings, the Director of the Service updated the press on the activities and statements of the Secretary-General, his special envoys and senior United Nations officials on the question of Palestine. Press releases were issued on the proceedings of the Human Rights Commission and human rights treaty bodies. The Radio and Television Section of the Service covered Palestine-related discussions, notably of the Human Rights Commission. Various information centres assisted in the identification of journalists to participate in the international media seminars on peace in the Middle East, held in Seville, Spain, and in Beijing.

Chapter VII
Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

77. **The Committee's utmost concern during the period under review has been the failure of efforts to reawaken the peace process against the backdrop of continuing violence, tragic loss of life and deepening humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Attempts to establish a ceasefire and stabilize the security situation did not achieve lasting results. The Israeli military's disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force, the practice of collective punishment, extrajudicial killings, and the detention and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians have resulted in the further destruction of the fabric of Palestinian society. The Committee is strongly opposed to the continued construction of the wall on Palestinian land and the expansion of settlements, which jeopardize international efforts to resolve the conflict. It maintains that the continuing Israeli occupation remains at the core of the conflict. A negotiated solution that would end the occupation and enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights is urgently needed.**

78. **The Committee continues to believe that the road map remains the best way to achieve the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders. A settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) in particular, and other relevant resolutions. Any unilateral moves by either party will not contribute to a durable settlement unless they are based on negotiations between the two sides and are part of the implementation of the road map. The Committee expresses the hope that the Quartet and the international community will continue to work towards the achievement of this goal.**

79. **While welcoming the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the position of the General Assembly in that regard, the Committee remains concerned that the illegal construction of the wall has not stopped. Its harmful effects continue to plague the daily lives of the thousands of Palestinians. The existence of the wall will hamper efforts to resolve the conflict and renders the vision of a two-State solution almost impossible. The Committee's position is that the international community must ensure that the occupying Power abide by the provisions of the Court's ruling and immediately stop and reverse the construction.**

80. **The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences facilitates the discussion and analysis of the various aspects of the question of Palestine. The meetings highlight the most pressing issues, such as the need to end violence, stop settlement activities and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population. They contribute to heightening international awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely, the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They also mobilize international support for efforts to resolve the conflict and implement the road map. The Committee is deeply appreciative of the involvement in these meetings of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and civil society. It expresses its satisfaction with the level of dialogue, engagement and support from the international community achieved at those meetings. It will continue this programme to foster support for the attainment**

by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international legitimacy. In its meetings in 2005, the Committee intends to address such issues as the application of international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine, the significance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the implementation of the road map, the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and of the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution, the need to protect the Palestinian people, the humanitarian and socio-economic situation, including the plight of Palestinian women and children, and the further involvement of civil society.

81. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion and for their unremitting initiatives to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. It notes the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening its cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages civil society organizations to focus their advocacy efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels on the legal obligations of Governments, as emphasized in the advisory opinion of the Court, and to coordinate their activities. It supports all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Committee will also strive to enhance the involvement of parliamentarians in various regions in its programme of meetings.

82. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and the implementation of its programme of work. The Committee, therefore, requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, and the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" web site; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee expects the Division to continue to heighten international awareness of the question of Palestine, and to strengthen support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this regard, the Committee notes with satisfaction (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the number of civil society organizations that have received accreditation to the Committee; and (c) the number of pages viewed on the United Nations web site on the question of Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for the staff of the Palestinian Authority has proved its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

83. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme's continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

84. **Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.**

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/31/35).

[2] Ibid., *Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/32/35); ibid., *Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35* and corrigendum (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., *Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35* and corrigendum (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., *Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/35/35); ibid., *Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/36/35); ibid., *Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35* and corrigendum (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., *Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/38/35); ibid., *Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/39/35); ibid., *Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/40/35); ibid., *Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/41/35); ibid., *Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/42/35); ibid., *Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/43/35); ibid., *Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/44/35); ibid., *Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/45/35); ibid., *Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/46/35); ibid., *Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/47/35); ibid., *Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/48/35); ibid., *Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/49/35), ibid., *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/50/35); ibid., *Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/51/35); ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/52/35); ibid., *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/53/35); ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/54/35); ibid., *Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/55/35); ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35* and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1); ibid. *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/57/35); and ibid., *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/58/35).

[3] A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, "Advisory opinion", para. 142.

[4] Ibid., para. 122.

[5] A/AC.183/2004/CRP.1.

[6] The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, African Union, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

[8] The text of the decision is contained in A/ES-10/L.17.

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